

MINUTES OF SAUGHALL AND SHOTWICK PARK'S ANNUAL PARISH MEETING  
held on 26 April 2010 at the Vernon Institute, Saughall

In attendance: Councillor Mrs K Ford  
Councillor DF Holman  
Councillor B Kerr  
Councillor Mrs J Knox  
Councillor RK Shukla  
Councillor A Warrington  
Councillor Mrs JM Young (in the Chair)

And 2 parishioners as recorded in the attendance register

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Mrs J Johnson  
Councillor JG Johnson

**2 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the Minutes of Saughall and Shotwick Park's Parish Meeting held on 27 April 2009 be confirmed as a correct record.

**3 CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT**

The Chairman welcomed parishioners to their Annual Assembly and then presented her Annual Report setting out the Council's achievements and successes over the last twelve months. She detailed ongoing initiatives, progress and the Council's aims and aspirations for the future.

Various issues were highlighted and considered in detail, these included:

- **Parish Council Elections – Thursday, 5 May 2011**

It was worth noting that this Council had one further year in office and would stand down in May 2011 after a five year term. Members were elected in May 2006 for four years and should have stood down this May but were given an extension so that Parish Elections could be held on 5 May 2011, on the same day as those of the new unitary authority, Cheshire West and Chester Council. Anyone interested in playing a part in the management of village facilities and becoming involved in wider issues such as planning and highway matters should think about standing for election.

- **What Facilities would you like to see in Saughall?**

The Council was currently drawing up an interim plan of projects it would like to embark upon if grant aid became available during 2010/11 to help fund them. Therefore, it was canvassing views on what facilities or services

parishioners would like to see introduced or replaced in the village in both the short and longer terms. Any suggestions were to be communicated to the Chairman or the Clerk.

The Parish Plan (drafted in 2004) would be reviewed and revised after the elections and proposals for the longer term would be included if there was enough community support for them.

- **Finance**

The Council's Financial Year ran from 1 April to 31 March and the bulk of its annual income came from the precept; a sum raised via the Council Tax.

The Council had kept its spending as low as possible in the current economic downturn and had set a prudent budget during 2009/10. The precept remained the same for 2010/11 as it was in 2009/10, at £44.53 per household per Band D property. This was truly a reflection on the good financial management, exercised by the Council. It would continue to monitor expenditure, particularly scrutinising the need for any that was unplanned.

The Council's budgets for the financial years 2009/10 and 2010/11 were as follows:

2009/10	£62,590.00
2010/11	£61,732.00

<b>Council Budget 2009/10</b>	
<b>Budget Head</b>	<b>Allocation (£)</b>
Environment	18,900.00
Golden Jubilee Park	6,545.00
Admin	19,810.00
Bus Shelters	2,500.00
Police	11,835.00
Garden of Remembrance	2,000.00
Contingency	1,000.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>62,590.00</b>

<b>Council Budget 2010/11</b>	
<b>Budget Head</b>	<b>Allocation (£)</b>
Environment	19,050.00
Admin	26,880.00
Police	11,800.00
Neighbourhood Management Team	1,000.00
Contingency	3,002.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>61,732.00</b>

- **Internal Auditor**

During the year the Council's Internal Auditor, Harry Dobson had resigned. The Chairman took the opportunity to thank him for carrying out the internal audit since 2002 and for all the time and commitment this had involved.

Bob Salisbury had accepted the Council's invitation to be its new Internal Auditor. The transition between auditors was smooth as Harry was on hand to offer advice. The Chairman also thanked Mr Dobson for this and Mr Salisbury for agreeing to take on this important role, the responsibility this involved and for the work he had undertaken so far.

- **Parish Council Surgeries**

Parish Council Surgeries continued to be held monthly between 10.00am and 10.45am generally on the Saturday immediately before the Council meeting. Members believed that it was important for them to be openly accessible and available to parishioners who want to discuss quality of life issues with Members. Successful Surgeries had been held outside the Co-op Store and dates were published well in advance in Parish Newsletters and on village notice boards. The Council was now trialling holding Surgeries at the Vernon Institute whilst the Farmers' Market was on.

- **Vernon Institute**

The Council had built up a savings fund which it used to provide contributions towards the costs of improving the building and fabric of the Vernon Institute, a listed building and an important community facility and village meeting point. During the last year the Council had contributed £915, which was 50% of the cost of the heating system repairs. Members now wanted to meet with members of the Vernon Institute Management Committee to agree a schedule of improvement works with realistic timescales. A meeting had been requested for this purpose.

- **Partnership Working and the PCSO Initiative**

This village has had its own PCSO since 1 April 2007 when Mike Butler took up the position. The Council originally had a three-year agreement with the Cheshire Constabulary and contributed £11,000 each year. It had now signed a further three-year contract. The Council's contribution had increased to £11,800 but it was able to secure a grant of £800 to help fund it from Cheshire West and Chester Councillor Andrew Storrar who was able to make discretionary payments towards good causes. The Chairman thanked Councillor Storrar for his financial assistance with this initiative.

PCSO Mike Butler continued to provide a visible uniformed presence and made a valuable contribution to the reduction of crime and disorder and the promotion of public reassurance and quality of life in the village. The Chairman put on record the Council's thanks and appreciation of his help and support over the years he had been attached to Saughall. Mike would be leaving his post as a PCSO in the new Municipal year to take up a well earned post as a police constable. Members were sad to see him go, Mike had served Saughall well. The Chairman wished him well on behalf of the Council and told the meeting that she was sure he would make an excellent Policeman. When Mike left Saughall a new PCSO would be assigned to Saughall.

- **Homewatch**

The Homewatch continued to thrive under the sound leadership of Councillor Ian Humphrey. Ian provided a valuable service and the Chairman paid tribute to him and thanked him for his hard work and commitment to Homewatch. Anyone who would like to join the Homewatch should contact Ian. Joining did not incur any expense and all were welcome.

The Chairman reminded the meeting of this important message

- No action could be taken unless crime and anti social behaviour was reported to the Police!

- **Neighbourhood Management Team**

The Council used its partnership with the police as a mechanism to form a Neighbourhood Management Team with other partners including the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and community volunteers. The Team was funded for a three-year period through a £10,000 grant from the Cheshire Community Council. It was made up of volunteers and its activities were co-ordinated extremely well by Tony Summers. The Chairman thanked all members of this Team for their tireless efforts, which had made a real difference to Saughall.

Unfortunately, the funding had now ceased and the Council had been unable to attract any new grants. It had put £1000 in the budget to try to keep the Team going and intended to exploit any grant aid opportunities it came across in the New Year to help fund projects and initiatives to make Saughall a safer place to live.

- **Litter Picking Contract**

The Council had awarded Mr Roy Hipkiss Saughall's Street Litter Contract for the period 22 May 2006 until 21 May 2010. It was expected that it would then invite tenders for this work for another four year period commencing on 22 May 2010.

However, as Cheshire West and Chester Council's future funding arrangements for litter picking in parished areas was still unknown the Council had, with Mr Hipkiss' agreement, extended his contract, on his current rate of £12,092.08 per annum, until 31 March 2011. It was now expected that a tender specification for the work required would be available in December 2010, subject to the necessary funding being in place.

- **Golden Jubilee Park**

During the year the play equipment for the younger children and the Cheshire railings had been painted to smarten them up. The swings had received some minor repairs as a result of wear and tear. Unfortunately, a cable on the new play net had been severed, the new park benches torn from their fixings and thrown in the pond and the cricket square damaged by children riding their bikes on it! The play net cost the Council £262 to repair and it cost £130 to mend the wet pour surface. This money had been earmarked for improvements.

Despite this mindless vandalism the Council has continued to develop the Park and was in the process of replacing the multi-play unit and slide.

The grass cutting contract had expired. Rather than going out to tender the Council and Saughall Cricket Club had agreed that the Club would maintain all of the sports pitches and play areas within the Golden Jubilee Park in future, at a price to be agreed annually (2010 - £2,500) and the Joint Use Agreement had been amended accordingly.

The car park did flood when there was a lot of heavy rain. The Council continued to seek a remedy for this problem and had some drainage work carried out this year, at a cost of £907.

The Community Pay Back Scheme was providing the labour for lots of maintenance projects in the Park and in other parts of the village. This resource was greatly appreciated and a token payment of £100 had been made for work completed so far.

In the interests of health and safety, the Council, as the land's owner, had taken the decision not to allow dogs in the Golden Jubilee Park. Signage was displayed in the park to this effect. Therefore, dog owners could face enforcement action if their dogs were found on this land.

- **The New School and the Thomas Wedge CE (Controlled) Junior School**

The new Saughall All Saints' Church of England Primary School opened in the autumn. It was a state of the art education facility. A Puffin Crossing had been installed on Church Road to improve safety. The Council was very pleased with this outcome as it had been campaigning for a crossing on this road for years.

Members were sad to see the old Thomas Wedge School demolished, as local children have been pupils there over the years. We were pleased with the new school but think it should have been built to accommodate more children. If Saughall children were refused places in the future we will know we were right!

The future of the Church Hall remained uncertain as does that of the former Ridings School building.

- **Traffic Congestion at All Saints Primary School**

The Council had been concerned by the traffic congestion on Church Road and in the Co-op Store's car park caused by parents dropping off and picking up their children from the new School. Members had worked with PCSO Mike Butler, the School and Cheshire West and Chester Council's Highways Officers to discourage parents from transporting their children by car and had made it known that they were very interested in supporting events like Walk to School Month and Walk to School Week. Children enjoyed special events and special days and Members believed that a focus on encouraging families to walk to school would help not only address the healthy schools agenda, but would also alleviate congestion around school, parking problems and improve pupil safety.

- **Highways Issues**

Traffic congestion, problems with the buses, damage to grass verges, parking, potholes and speeding cars were recurring themes at Council meetings. The Council worked with the Police, the Highways Authority and the bus companies to try to remedy these problems. Members and volunteers had been trained to use a speed gun and a speed indicator device, which they borrowed from the principal authority. Speed checks would be repeated often, as a deterrent, for those who

regularly offended. The Council aspired to meet the criteria laid down to become a community speed watch area.

- **Wain House Re-development**

Chester District Housing Trust (CDHT) had begun to re-develop the site of Wain House and five bungalows at Rakeway. Its principal contractor Seddons was building 37 apartments for the over 55s with associated open space. CDHT had promised to ensure, through its own and the Council's Newsletter, that all local residents were kept informed of any progress with the building work and key dates. The project was expected to be completed by the end of April 2011.

- **Affordable Housing Scheme**

Cheshire West and Chester Council's Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager had informed the Council that her Council's Property Team were preparing a brief to go to partner housing associations inviting proposals for affordable housing at the Lodge Lane site.

- **Planning**

The Council was a statutory consultee on all planning applications in its area. It provided a focal point for the views of local residents and had an opportunity to support or oppose each application. In the course of this Municipal year the Council had dealt with 30 applications compared with 38 last year. The number of planning applications being submitted each year was decreasing, probably due to the recession.

- **All Saints Church – Garden of Remembrance**

The All Saints Church burial ground was almost full and no other land had been identified for burial in the village. The Church had approached the Council requesting a financial contribution towards developing the new Garden of Remembrance and earlier this year it donated £2000 to assist this initiative.

- **Christmas Lights Celebration - Thursday, 3 December 2009**

The 2009 Christmas Lights Celebration was well supported by the Council who paid for the Christmas tree and lighting modifications. The Chairman thanked Councillor Jean Johnson and the Christmas Lights Steering Group for organising this popular seasonal event. The turn out was high as local people entered into the Christmas spirit. The Council was extremely grateful to those who helped with the preparation and arrangements at such a busy time of year.

- **Communications**

The Parish Council's website was regularly updated ([www.saughall.gov.uk](http://www.saughall.gov.uk)) to keep people abreast of its activities etc. The Council also published a newsletter four times a year and local people and village organisations were actively encouraged to contribute to it and/or advertise in it. It made a very interesting read and people did look forward to receiving it. The Clerk and the Chairman could be contacted by email and parishioners were invited to use this facility to

send items and photographs for possible inclusion in future issues and to pass on their comments. ([clerk@saughall.gov.uk](mailto:clerk@saughall.gov.uk) and [chairman@saughall.gov.uk](mailto:chairman@saughall.gov.uk))

- **And finally ...**

The Parish Council has again had a heavy workload and the Chairman thanked her fellow Parish Councillors for their support and encouragement and the Parish Clerk for her contributions and hard work over the last year. She also thanked those members of the public, who had brought matters to the Council's attention, or who had come along to the Council's meetings during the year.

2010 promised to be another interesting year and the Parish Council was determined to ensure that the pleasant environment here in Saughall, and the quality of life that was enjoyed, was maintained at the highest possible level.

#### **4 PUBLIC DISCUSSION**

Questions and subsequent discussions centred on the following issues:

- Heavy vehicles were navigating the narrow roads in Saughall Hey to reach the development works on the Wain House site. Cheshire West and Chester Council was the Highway Authority not the Parish Council so concerns needed to be brought to its attention. Prior to the Ridings Estate being built vehicles were unable to access Meadows lane from Saughall Hey and the road had not been built to accommodate the volume of through traffic that used them now.
- Cheshire West and Chester Council had closed the Ridings Infant School as it was not required once the new all through All Saints Primary School opened in the autumn. A question mark hung over the future of the former school building. If eventually the Principal Authority sold this site for development purposes the Parish Council must try to ensure that it negotiated some planning gain via S106 Agreements.

These agreements were a way of delivering or addressing matters that were necessary to make a development acceptable in planning terms. They were increasingly used to support the provision of services and infrastructure, such as highways, recreational facilities, education, health and affordable housing.

- The possibility of putting in a lay by in Saughall Hey that could be used for parking purposes. This proposal would mean that vehicles did not park at the side of the narrow road and this would make it easier to negotiate. The Parish Council had considered the costs and benefits of this proposal over the years and were aware that a lay by could only be provided at a significant cost.
- Currently, parked vehicles on the road in Saughall Hey helped to keep motorists's speeds down.
- The Parish Council should try to bring pressure to bear in the hope that an Affordable Housing Scheme could be provided on the Lodge Lane

site. The Council was fully behind such a scheme but was aware that it could only proceed with the cooperation of Cheshire West and Chester Council and if the necessary funding was in place.